



# Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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## **PINELLAS COUNTY TITLE AGENT PLEADS GUILTY TO A MORTGAGE FRAUD CONSPIRACY**

Tampa, FL - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that Randolph "Randy" Griffin (age 44, of Pinellas County) yesterday pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud and wire fraud. Griffin faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison and a money judgment in the amount of \$5.3 million.

According to the plea agreement, while working at Diamond Title, Griffin, a title agent, conspired to defraud a mortgage lender and a seller by allowing the buyer to "fake" certain down payments. Title agents are supposed to prepare true and accurate settlement statements in real estate closings and provide the same to the lenders. Griffin, however, prepared false HUD-1s to send to the primary lender that falsely showed, for example, a more than half million dollar down payment. A second or "dueling" HUD-1 was given to another person that showed the truth, that the buyer had put down nothing into the deal and ended up getting cash out of it.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas N. Palermo.

This case is part of the Middle District of Florida's Mortgage Fraud Surge, a joint effort by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Tampa and Jacksonville Divisions, and numerous other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The Surge focuses intensive investigative and prosecutorial resources on the mortgage fraud crisis that plagues middle Florida and has contributed to the current economic situation nationwide. It is designed to accelerate mortgage fraud cases in order to bring perpetrators to justice quickly and provide maximum deterrence. For more information on the Middle District of Florida's Mortgage Fraud Surge, please contact Steve Cole, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office.